THE MOUNTAIN PREACHER

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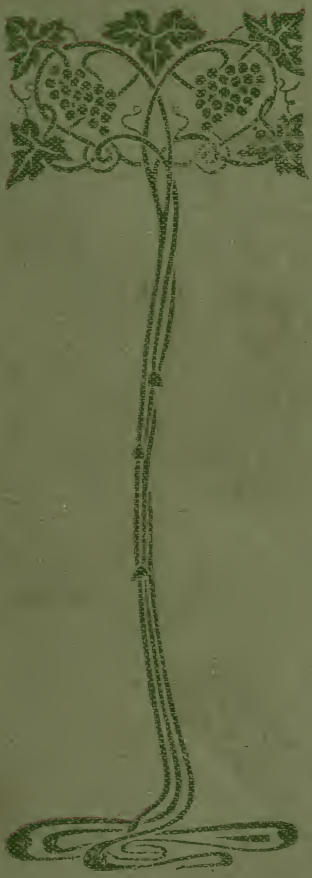

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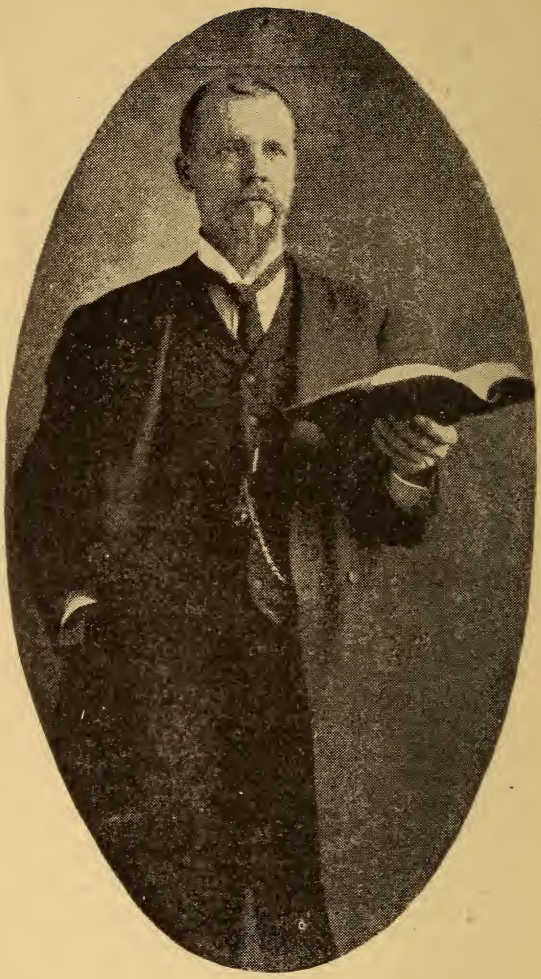

J. L. DAVIS.

The Mountain Preacher

Being some of the experience, told in the language of the people among whom he so successfully labored

BY

J. L. DAVIS

The Mountain Evangelist

F. L. ROWE, Publisher
Cincinnati
1909

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INTRODUCTION.

Dear reader, will you please be introduced to this peculiar piece of literature? It is intended to enlarge our sympathies for the true and tried misionaries in our own country. Those who are able and willing to preach to the rich will find plenty of substantial sympathy. But those who go and labor among the destitute, depraved and uncultured often meet with difficulties unknown to our more prosperous brother. The writer of this sketch is personally acquainted with Bro. J. L. Davis and his family, having been with him in meetings in the mountains of Kentucky. His fight has been hard, but his victories have been many and glorious. With a ready memory, a native

ability, splendid social powers, strong faith, undaunted courage and untiring energy, he has shown what the Word of God can do in the hands of "a man without an education." He is our second "Raccoon" of Kentucky. May God speed this little book, "The Mountain Evangelist," on its way to bless hundreds and thousands of readers.

THADDEUS S. HUTSON,
Covington, Ind.

Since I have been engaged in several meetings with Bro. Davis and have known him about fourteen years, it may not be out of place for me to say a few words concerning him.

When I first met him at Somerset, Ky., I was much impressed with his personality.

He and my brother George at that time were suffering much persecution

while opposing sectarianism in that section of the country.

In the last few years I have been with Bro. Davis in meetings in the mountain section of Kentucky. It is wonderful what a great influence he has over those people. I was glad to be among them and "confirm the Word" that our brother preached with such great power and boldness. The mountain people have always interested me, They seem to enjoy hearing the preaching of the gospel more than people in other sections. It would do careless Christians good to see how they attend meeting.

Often we started to the night meeting soon after eating dinner on account of the distance and rough roads. A meeting was not considered complete without the "day meetings" during the week.

In the social circle Bro. Davis was generally "the center of attraction." The people hung on his words in the pulpit and out of it. They sought his advice

concerning management of crops, domestic affairs, etc.

As an exhorter I never have heard his equal. It seemed that sinners were compelled to come to Christ.

Few men have been so successful in overcoming their enemies with the truth.

This booklet ought to be helpful to every Christian, as it shows what can be accomplished by the faithful preaching of God's Word though it be by one who has had few educational advantages.

JNO. A. KLINGMAN.

Sellersburg, Ind., July 20, '08.

THE MOUNTAIN PREACHER.

I was born near Chattanooga, Tenn., Jan. 5, 1865, in the time of the cruel war. My father went away to the war and never returned, so with a dear mother poor in this world's goods, and in a southern state almost torn to pieces, I was brought up without a father, and without an education.

I came up to manhood without God and Hope. On April 5, 1887, I was married to Miss Mattie Sanders, at Shellmound, Tenn. Shortly after this event I began to think about the future, and as my wife was a good Methodist and I knew but little about religion, I was soon led to seek the Lord at a mourner's bench; but did not find him, and was only confused. So I went away and almost gave up to unbelief. In 1890 I heard the gospel in its simplicity for the first time. With my wife's aid I learned to read the New Testament. In Feb., of

1891, I heard a debate between a Gospel Preacher and a Methodist, and during that debate I was convinced that there was but one church. After that my wife and I read the One Book as never before. We had a little log-cabin 12 x 14 setting among the hills of Clay County, Tenn., and it was there that I learned "What to do to be saved" (Acts 16:30) and on May 29, 1891, I was born again (John 3:50), and then I began to work out my own salvation (Phil. 2:12).

I went to a writing school for eight days and learned how to write. In May, 1893, I made the first effort to "Preach the Gospel" in Pulaski County, Ky. This effort was a very weak one. But instead of becoming discouraged I continued to study the Word of the Lord, for He said "Come to Me and learn of Me" and I did. And He also said "If any of you lack wisdom, ask of God." So the good work went on and I lived and preached in Kentucky for about fifteen years.

In April, 1908, I moved with my family to the Ozark Mountains in Missouri to preach the Gospel to the poor.

I pray this book may do you good.

J. L. DAVIS.

THE MOUNTAIN PREACHER.

In 1889 I begin to realize that I ought to be saved and I begin seekin' the Lord at a Methodist mourner's bench, but I failed to receive any evi*dence* of my bein' pardoned, and I left the mourner's bench worse confused than I ever was and in a worse condition. In the year 1890 I for the first time heerd the Gos*pel* preached by a disciple of Christ showin' what to do to become a Christian. By the help of my wife I begin to learn to read. The next spring, in May, 1891, I made the confession and was baptized for the remission of sins, and in 1893, at least from then, I begin to study the Scriptures, and in 1893, on May 3rd, Lord's Day night, I preached my first discourse, in Pulaski County, Kentucky, on the text, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"—Acts 16:30. From then I continued preachin' on from house to house and talkin' the Scriptures with quite a lot of opposition,

and in 1895 I baptized the first persons, and continued preachin' agin very much opposition through that part of the mountins of Kentucky.

I went out on Buck Creek near the mouth of Whetstone, and begin a-preachin' the Gos*pel* out there. They had a union house there but refused to let me in the house, so I went to preachin' the Gos*pel* in the woods. Had several additions, several were added to the Church of Christ. The opposition begin to git higher and higher, till finally one of the Trustees of the Methodist Church accepted the Gos*pel* under my preachin', then the opposition growed higher and higher, and finally they succeeded in burnin' the house down; the house was burned and my life threatened.

I went from there into Whitely County and begin a-preachin' the Gos*pel* in the open air. Had several additions. Started a little congregation with about thirty members, and built a little mission house

there, but the opposition was so great they hev taken the deed and burned it up and took the house away from the people that built it.

From there went to Money's in the same county and begin a-preachin' the Gos*pel* there and several accepted the Gos*pel*, one was a Baptist preacher. The opposition begin to grow mighty rapidly agin us, and finally they succeeded in lockin' us out of the house. One of the digressive preachers come with quite a mob, and they attempted to shoot me while I was preechin'. One drunk man 'tempted to shoot me. We then went from there when we seen we couldn't do no more good, we went to Maple Grove, bein't invited there by a man that was a worldly man. I begin preachin' the Gos*pel* there in the Baptist meetin' house. Opposition was very great and they succeeded in lockin' me out there, and I jest went out on the creek and begin to preachin' the Gos*pel* on the creek bank. One man a

desperado, A. Hamlin, come to my meetin' to break it up, to run me off. He was converted afterwards and is now a preacher of the Gospel. I continued to preach there for ten years, we havin' a little meeting house there at Maple Grove. The church is growin' very rapidly. I jest close a meetin' there last month, and the man that invited me there ten year ago was converted and baptized.

From there I went into Woodbine in the same county, and begin preachin' the Gospel there. They closed all the meetin' house doors, all the denominations closed their doors agin me. I went out and begin preachin' in the school house with about thirteen out to hear me. Opposition grew rapidly and one of the deacons of one of the denominations, it was said, —I don't know fer sure whether it was so—hired two young men to come out and shoot and break up my meetin'. They failed to break it up, and I continued to preach two weeks or more and had

seventy-one additions. From there I went to Corbin, Kentuck, and begin preachin' the Gos*pel* in a hall, and they shut me out, closed the door agin me, and I went and hired another hall. The opposition grew very strong and I was ordered to leave the town. One of the clergymen of the city wrote it up in the city papers, declarin' that I was a false teacher and warned all the people agin hearin' me; succeeded in lockin' every door against me and stirrin' up public opinion. One of the pastors attempted to strike me on the street. I continued preachin' for about two week, and then they sent for one of their able preachers to come, and he challenged me for a public debate. We begin the debate with the understandin' only thirty minutes each, and the debate closed after two hours and a half's struggle for the truth. He made a complete failure and on the next mornin' took the first train and left the town. I continued the meetin' one week longer with a crowded hall, and several of the best citizens of the town were converted to the truth. So that was the beginnin' of the Church of Christ in Corbin, under great opposition.

From there I went to Knox County

and begin the work there, with all the meetin' house doors closed agin me, in the meetin' house yard. Opposition was very great. I preached about two week with forty-eight additions to the Church of Christ. The preachers got very badly excited. One of them come to my meetin' and called me a liar right while I was preachin'; notwithstandin' I preached right on and succeeded in establishin' the truth in Knox County.

From there I think I went to Mill Creek in Pulaski County, among some of the terriblust, roughest people that I most ever met. I begin to preach the Gos*pel* in the school house; the opposition begin to grow agin us, and on about the third night of the meetin' some wild, desperate men come to my meetin' and after bein' dismissed begin to shoot in the yard. Next mornin' I noticed the door was very badly shot up. I gained the confi*dence* of one of the most desperate men of the gang, and he swore with

an oath that the next man that fired a gun while I was preachin', that he would kill him. On the next mornin' his brother come to me, which was a member of the church, and with tears in his eyes begged me to close the meetin', for, says he, "I know my brother and if these men come back tonight and begin shootin' like they did las' night, that he will kill one or more of them, and it'll be a general fight." So I told him that I had announced my meetin' and no sech element as that couldn't scare me out of that. Several attempted to make me leave, but I refused to go, so on the next night we met. All of those desperadoes come in a-laffin' and talkin', and jest as I riz up to begin my sermon, in steps this man with his Winchester rifle heavily loaded, takin' a seat near the door. I noticed the boys begun to look one towards the other and smile, but didn't say anythin'. I preached as never befo' to win the boys over to Christ. They refused to accept the Gos*pel,* how-

ever, but they never fired a shot that night near the meetin' house, neither while I was continuin' the meetin'; and when I dismissed the meetin' this man stepped out of the door and off about ten or fifteen steps off at the side of the road, with his gun in his hand. They knew that he was desperate and meant what he said, so there wasn't a gun fired. I continued preachin' and several was convinced of the truth and accepted the Gospel. I closed the meetin' with great interest and a large crowd, and the truth was established in the homes and in the community of one of the most desperate places in the mountins of Kentucky near the great Eagle Creek battle field, where there has been two or three men—I disremember whether two or three, I believe three—were killed in the meetin' house yard.

Back I went in the same county and begin preachin' at Walnut Grove in John

Saturday Day Meeting at Providence, Church of Christ, Rockcastle Co., Ky.
August, 1905.

Riddle's barnyard, under a nice shade, with all the meetin' house doors closed against me. The pastors of the denominations, especially one, were very bitter against me, and had succeeded in poisonin' the minds of all the brethren in that community against me. I preached about ten days there with great success, several received the truth. I received a call from there to Provi*dence,* a few miles north. This pastor of the Christian Church, Mr. John Todd, were preachin' to the congregation at Provi*dence* an' poisonin' the minds of the people against me, and when he learned that I was comin', he made all manner of fun of me, comparin' me to a monkey, and told the brethren that if I preached in that house that he never would come again. Finally the brethren told him I was comin' and to announce the meetin', which he refused, and as he rode out of the community I rode in and begin preachin' the Gos*pel* in the meetin' house with a very few people out to hear

me. I continued the meetin' and the people begin to see that I had been misrepresented, and that the Church of Christ and the Christian Church were not the same, therefore I succeeded in gettin' them to get their deed that had been filed for record in the clerk's office, and bring it back to the meetin' house and changed it to the Church of Christ, and their church record was changed from the Christian Church to the Church of Christ; and in one single day 101 confessed their faults one to another, and was willin' to walk by faith instid of human opinion. It was a gran' meetin' indeed, nearly fifty from the world and denominations were added to them, makin' about 200. We continued the preachin' in that community for about seven years.

From there we went to Bethel where we had been badly misrepresented, and begun to preach the Gospel with very few to hear, but we succeeded in establishin' the truth there with fifty-one additions.

From there we went to Friendship and begin preachin' the Gos*pel* where this same pastor as above had labored hard to keep us out. We went there and he fled—Proverbs, 28:1. We begin preachin' with very few to hear us. One of the old elders was so poisoned agin us that he did not think we preached the truth, and he asked the liberty to stand by my side and would look at the Scriptures as I would read it. He only had to stand a few discourses until the old man, with tears in his eyes, confessed that he wa' wrong, that his mind had been confused by the modern pastors, and thus he remained my friend till his death. We succeeded in that place in gettin' the Christian Church to accept the name of the Church of Christ, as they had onct been known, but had departed. Opposition grew very high there and at the close of the meetin', in the presence of about five hundred people, I stood on the Creek bank and preached the Gos*pel,* several

made the confession there at the water, among them were a very zealous Methodist preacher's daughter confessed her Saviour and was baptized for the remission of sins. As I baptized her and led her to the bank, I raised my hand in the presence of the opposition, and said "I thank God the first lady I baptized in the State of Kentucky was a sprinkled Methodist and the last one is." This caused considerable opposition, and before the meetin' was dismissed I was challenged for a public discussion. I accepted the proposition and on the follerin February 11th we met in the Methodist meetin' house near this place for a public investigation. I led the affirmative for three days. I affirmed that the Methodist discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church taught practices and usages contrary to the Bible. Mr. Mc*Nam*ara, a thoroughbred Irishman, was my opponent on the occasion. I think three days the fight continued between light and dark-

ness, and the doctrines of men suffered and the Gospel of Christ was victorious. Mr. Mc*Nam*ara made a complete failure. His brethren seen it, and afterwards said he was not a member of the Methodist Church. Notwithstandin', after the debate closed I baptized another Methodist preacher's daughter and about fifteen others—most of them had been sprinkled—averagin' from forty to sixty-five years of age. Opposition begin to rise very great, some begin to cry one thing and some another. Multitude begun to be divided. They begun to circulate all kinds of stories on me. They found they couldn't defeat me through a public debate, and now they begin through the secret works of darkness. My friends who were very zealous when I was in the debate telling my Methodist friends of their wrong, when I turned on them and told them they would have to denounce lodgism for we could not serve two masters, then they turned and joined the

mob that was agin me, and begin to threaten me with all kinds of threats. Finally made the threat that they would take my life, that I should not preach another sermon. I met them the day set for the exposure of their doctrine. They failed to establish any truth, but the one that brought the charge agin me was withdrawn from the church, and then in the follerin month I were preachin' near there, I was conductin' a series of meetings, and one of the elders invited me to come over, tellin' me at the same time that this opposition party had declared that if I come on the ground they would kill me. Several of my friends had advised me not to go, but I didn't listen to them, but to the text from the Apostle Paul which says, "Neither give place to the devil" that kep' ringin' upon my mind, and I started for Rockcastle again. Several of the brethren from Goochtown accompanied me over. When we'd gotten about one mile to the meetin' house

we was met—my friends assurin' me that this was the man that had killed a man a short time before that in the meetin' yard and he now had joined the mob and was there to turn me back; that this man and his family had divided, there was five in his home, and three was for me and two against me. So the Scripture was fulfilled which says, there shall be five in one house divided two against three and three against two, and a man's foes shall be them of his own household. Him and his son had had some very heavy words, his son takin' his gun and told his father that the first man that 'tempted to interfere with me that day that he would kill him, he didn't care who it was, and so his father started on a run to cut me off a mile before I got to the meetin' house. Thar I was met by about seventy-five of my friends and with tears in their eyes they begin to talk to me and tried to turn me back from going to this place for this appointment where they had threatened

me, insistin' there was about thirty men that had bound themselves almost under a curse that they intended to kill me if I come on the ground. They continued talkin' and tryin' to get me to turn back. I refused by askin' them, "Brethren, is there any grave-yards in this country?" They said yes. "Well," I says, "we will go on; I didn't want to be responsible for starting a new grave-yard, or for shippin' the dead away." I said to the driver, "Move on." The excitement was runnin' high, some of my friends got me by the hand and with tears—some climbin' in the rig—begged me to turn back; excitement almost as great as when Paul started to Jerusalem. We got around about two hundred yards, and there we met the large crowd, and there was this man cursin' and swearin', and he said if there was any killin' that day that he would be in it—a most desperate character. When I driv round to the place, my friends continued to plead with me to

turn back. I let them know I war not of them that turned back. One of the brethren says, "Bro. Davis, we have come here to go with you to your appointment, if you want to go, or if you want to turn back we are ready to turn back with you." "Well" I said, "certainly I am not goin' to turn back, let us go, we only have about ten or fifteen minutes to get there," and so we moved. When we got near the place, it was right near the top of a high mountin, the excitement was so high when we got near the top and started around near the woods that one of my friends rid his horse on top of the bank and held his horse between me and the bushes, thinkin' I would be shot from ambush. The nearer we got to the house the quieter the people become, and as we drove up the mob were standin' in the front of the meetin' house yard. The closter we got the paler they got. That was a tryin' time. I looked at my driver, and I don't think he will ever be any paler

when he is no more in this world. We drove up within a short distance of the mob. I said "Turn into the fence, George. Tie up." We turned in, everybody dismounted as quick as possible, the largest crowd, I guess, that had ever gathered at that place. My friends was there from the different parts of the country, and all of my enemies. The enemies were filled with red whiskey to encourage them to commit their terrible crime; but red whiskey seemed to lose its power, and their pistols failed to work, and I entered the house. My friends gathered at the windows and doors to keep me from bein' shot frim the windows. As I entered the house, I said, "Brethren, the Scriptures say if any be merry let him sing songs. I think that we ought to be the happiest people on earth. Let every one that can sing, sing," and they sang as never before. I entered into the pulpit, begin readin' Scripture very appropriate to the occasion, of the mob that was

against the Apostle Paul as he entered into the great country of Philippi. After readin' and prayer we begun our discourse on the Kingdom of Light and the Kingdom of Darkness, from Daniel, the second chapter, and I did preach, as some said, as never before. The discourse lasted two hours and forty minutes. I preached not only for the benefit of my friends and those in the house, but for the mob that was frequently passin' up and down the road, filled with red whiskey and carryin' big pistols. Before I got half through the big majority of the mob had disappeared and gone back home to report their defeat.

A man that had attempted to shoot me about one month before that, after we were dismissed follered me about one mile, and with tears in his eyes confessed his sins and asked my forgiveness, and with open arms I received him back as my friend again. This victory was so great that I was completely overcome. I

went back then to Goochtown where I was carryin' on a series of meetin's, where many of my friends follered me, and the good work continued. This place was the place I had went and had began the first successful meetin' one year before, I preached at that place in the school house under great opposition, those that made light of me declarin' no Church of Christ would be established in that community. So I begin preachin' the Gos*pel* askin' for wisdom from on high. The community were 'roused to a sense of their duty, and an old man that lived near, that had four sons, three of them were baptized preachers, seemed to get very nervous and sent for one of his sons that was off a distance, and their preacher, to come and defend their craft for it was in danger. So I continued to preach, and one of his sons that had been preachin' for several years turned loose from the doctrins of men and accepted the Gos*pel* of Christ, and then at a later period an-

other one of his boys come over with forty-seven others, and to-day there stands a nice little meetin' house with a strong Church of Christ meetin' upon the first day of the week.

From there I went to Mt. Vernon, the county seat of Rockcastle County. I begin preachin' the Gos*pel* in the Christian Church's meetin' house. Opposition grew very high, some cried one thing and some another. They begin makin' light of me, the lawyers and doctors begin holdin' council. They begin to call it strange doctrine. I continued to preach on till the follerin Saturday night, the number had growed from a few to the house filled I give an invitation on that night for some one to obey the Gos*pel*. I looked down the aisle and I seen an aged man comin' forward who had come about fifteen miles to obey the Gospel. Jest over his head a little to the right was a little bird flutterin' along, looked like tryin' to light in mid air. It came on up, the people was

singin', it flew around over the organ—I had taken the old man by the hand and seated him. The little bird flew on the pulpit and on to my Bible, with its back to the audience, and flutterin' its little wings. The audience become confused and several made some foolish remarks. I remarked, "Ladies and gentlemen, don't allow the little bird to disturb you, it has lit on the only thing that will stand when the heavens and earth are on fire." I had no more than made the remark when the little bird started toward the door, flyin' over the heads of the people in the center aisle. I supposed it had gone out the door, but to my astonishment in a few moments I seen it comin' back down the aisle on the other side. One of my greatest opposers had been takin' notes. His wife was bitterly opposed to me. She was president of the Ladies' Aid Society and hated me because I told her the truth, and would not allow the use of the organ in the worship. The little bird lit on the

J. L. Davis baptizing in Renfro Creek, Rockcastle Co., Ky., Sept. 8, 1901.
Sixty-one added.

old man's head, he raised his hand and gently touched it, and it went the second time to my Bible and lit, and begin flutterin' as it did before. By that time the song had almost ceased. People was gettin' very nervous, several women almost fainted. I asked the audience to take their seats, but I never seen the little bird no more.

On the next night forty odd men and women expressed their desires to stand for the Church of Christ, and turned loose the doctrines and commandments of men. I closed the meetin' on account of other engagements and went away; but before I could get back to this place again the interest had gone down. They had hired them a little pastor at a stipulated salary, who poisoned the minds of the people agin me, later brought reproach upon the church and upon himself, and went away in disgrace. When I couldn't get their house no more to preach in, I went down east of there and

begin preachin' the Gos*pel* on the Creek in the valley, and continued there for about two weeks, succeeded in havin' sixty-one additions, bandin' together sixty-one men and women for the Church of Christ. Opposition run very high, and finally they succeeded in takin' the house from us. By this time the Christian Church at Mt. Vernon had begun to send men out on the other side of the town to preach and try to overcome my influ*ence* over there. After they had made a complete failure, I went over and begin preachin' the Gos*pel* in the school house. The result was that directly the house wouldn't hold the people. I preached two weeks under great opposition, and succeeded in establishin' a church with forty members. We begin at once to build a new house.

From there I went to Shiloh on the edge of Whitley County, and when I rid up in the school house yard I noticed the

trees, the bark was shot off of them all around the meetin' ground. It looked more like a battle-field than it did like where people worshiped God. I began with few out to hear me. The boys with big pistols on them walked about the house and talked to their girls while I was preachin'. As they seen they couldn't disturb me that way, they walked out of the house and begin beatin' and poundin' the wall near where I was standin', and I 'spose thought they would soon see a preacher runnin'. But to their great astonish*ment* I helt the fort, and preached on as though nothin' had happened. I called for a hymn to close my discourse, and as the people were standin' singin' the young men rushed into the door. After the hymn I asked all to be seated as could and I begin to talk to the young men quietly and gentely, and on the next return there, instid of havin' so many big pistols, they met me and shuck hands with me and begin to assist me in the

meetin' by singin', givin' the best of 'tention, and on my next trip the crowd was so great we couldn't get in the school house, and after buildin' an arbor we begin preachin' the Gos*pel,* and several of them was led to Christ. They found instid of my abusin' them, I talked to them kindly, and thus they become my friends instid of my enemies; learnin' that I was a common man and that Jesus was a common Master, they become obedient to the Gos*pel,* and today some of them are contendin' for the faith.

From there I disremember just where I went—to Cumbling Falls Station, I think, where I had once preached a few times. Quite a lot of excitement when I got there. The train left me on the day I was to began. The secret orders and denominations had combined their forces against me. I failed to git there at the time appointed. They had began an opposition meetin' in the town tryin' to hold the people. When I got there the

next day they had began their meetin' on the edge of the town, and our meetin' house was about two miles up on the hill. The preacher had made several assertions in reference to me not comin', and that he was goin' to continue the meetin'. When I got there, instid of goin' on up to the meetin' house where I was to began, I went to his meetin'. I seen from his gestures that he was a secret order man, and so I remembered that when I enter into a strong man's house, I must first bind the strong man's hands, and knowin' that with all the secret orders and denominations with him against me, that it would be a great fight between light and darkness. So I taken a seat and listen at him, and when he got through he never asked whether I had anything to say, but just as he said Amen and dismissed, I called the attention and announced on the next night, the Lord willin', I would begin preachin' the Gos*pel* on the hill in the meetin' house, and those who wished to

hear the Gos*pel* in its plain and simplicity to come up the hill. I turned and put on my overcoat, and as I did the pastor was brought around to be introduced. I reached ont and give him the strong grip of the lion's paw. He answered it back and smiled, and said, "Why, Bro. Davis, I am certainly glad to meet you, We both stand on the square now." I walked down the aisle shakin' hands with my friends on the right hand and on the left. I had no more time with the pastor for I knowed he remembered his obligations on his knees before the altar, that he would say nothin' before his fellow-craft's face or behind his back that would offend him. So I moved towards the door, and I had only got ten or fifteen steps from the door when I heerd the noise of some one comin' fast after me. Turnin' I saw the pastor with his grip in his hand. He run up near and said "Bro. Davis, where do you belong?" I suppose

he meant where was the Lodge that I belonged to, but I said "I belong at Woodbine," that is I meant that I lived there. Then I knew, in order for me to become all things unto him, that I must do the talkin', and I begin the talk. I asked where his membership was; he soon told me. I asked him how many members, how strong the lodge was, and how many degrees could they give there? He told me, and invited me sometime to stop and give the lodge a call. We parted in a few moments, and on the next day I went down on the mountin, gettin' ready for my meetin'. He went over to the town and begin to tell the people of what craft that I belonged to, and declared that I was a high standin' Mason. So I begin preachin' the Gos*pel* upon the mountins, and as Jesus said, "If I be lifted up I draw all men unto me," I did that with all the power that was in me, and in a few nights his audience had run down very small and he closed his meetin' and went

away. The crowd increased upon the hill, and we succeeded in the conversion of several men and women. In about two years later I were called to that place to show why men and women ought not belong to nothin' but the Church of Christ. The pastor had fled, but after I had gone he come in and tried to confuse the minds of the people, but to no avail. On the day set for me to show why men and women ought to belong to the Church of Christ, the excitement was runnin' very high. My life was threatened, men swore that they would shoot me. My brethren, some of them, seemed very nervous, and they had so arranged that if they was to attempt to assassinate me that the sisters was to surround me, form a chain guard around me. On the hour set the people begin to come from miles. That was the worst attempt that ever I saw. On the hour set I went into the stand and read the Scriptures and read the follerin text: Luke 12:2, 3, 4:

"For there is nothin' covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known. Therefore, whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light; and that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets shall be proclaimed upon the housetops." So I begin to make known these wonderful truths. I let the men and women know—they seemed to be very nervous; it was thought not less than fifty guns was in the house; I said, "Ladies and gentlemen, I am here to-day to tell you the reason of the hope that is in me; with God's Word in my hand, for your own good to tell you that if you want to be saved that you must have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness." They seemed very nervous; I could hardly keep the order for a while. And as I proceeded they were one of the most terriblest looking woman that I ever seen come into the meetin'. She had been seen in the mornin' near the meetin'

house in company with one of the Secret Order men talkin'; she was the most filthiest awful lookin' woman I ever seen. The man she talked to come in just ahead of her and taken his seat, and in a few moments she come in, very dirty and with very few clothes on her, and walked briskly right up to me as I stood in the stand in the very heighth of my discourse, and said "Mister, don't you believe that peoples is warned of when they are goin' to die. I have come for you to tell me. I don't want to die before I get home!" I said, "I have a very important subject here under discussion, and I don't wish to be disturbed. Please take a seat and when I am through I will talk to you about dyin'." The sisters made room and seated her, but none of them set very clost to her, for she looked as if she would almost defile even the meetin' house by sittin' on the seat. She might have been drunk. I continued to discourse. Directly I noticed the man that

had come in jest ahead of her riz up and walk out, and in a few moments she riz up and started to-wards the door. When she got out in the yard the excitement got very high. Some of my friends went ont and ordered her to leave. She declared she was goin' to begin screamin', and one man told her ef she did he'd kill her. One of my friends, a young man, ran for his wagon and brought it up in a hurry, put her into it and drove her, as hard as his team would go, for about one mile, away into the forest, and dropped her at the side of the road as a man would a cat that he didn't need about his home, then hurried back to the scene to haul off more men or women, either dead or alive, for the threats by this time was runnin' very high. As I seen the audience began to get very nervous, especially those who was bound by the yoke of bondage, I said "Ladies and gentlemen, I want you to understand that I am a candidate for assassination, if it takes that to

establish the truth in this community." They become very nervous and looked at each other, still havin' their eyes on me in the stand, and set quiet. I closed my discourse, and said "Now if there is a man in this audience that can take the Bible and show that God is the author of these institutions, I will submit and say no more. But if you can't, you must submit and forever hold your peace. One poor fellow riz up, a former convert of the Rev. Russell of Allegheny, Pennsylvania. He riz in the audience very pale and tremblin', and said he had a few words to say. I said "All right, if you kin show that I am wrong, I will submit and the fight will stop, if you kin show by the Bible that I am wrong." I told him to come forward, and he begin. He got very nervous, not touchin' the subject at all, and I called upon the audience if they could explain what that I had said in reference to any one that might try to prove I were wrong. Then I says to him, I

J. L. Davis baptizing in Brash Creek, Aug. 26, 1900. Twenty-nine in twenty minutes.

says "Give us verse and chapter for your human organization or take your seat." He said "I was jest tryin' to tell you what Job said." I says "Are you so excited that you can't tell Solomon from Job? You are readin' in Proverbs." He got very nervous and started walkin' backwards and fell off the rostrum, and as he riz he started to-ward the door, forgettin' his hat, and I ordered one of the brethren to take his hat to him, and he made his escape. I said, "If there is another one that wishes to attempt to prove by the Scriptures that I am wrong to-day, now is your time." Several got up and left the house. I continued the services and the next day several made the good confession, Two young men denounced lodgism and is now members of the Church of Christ.

From there I went to Sloan's Valley and begin to preach the Gos*pel,* called together a small congregation there, and those when they heard that I was opposed

to the secret works of darkness, they got very nervous. Some didn't want me to come while others did, so finally I preached the Gospel to them and showed why they should belong to the Church *of* Christ and that only. Excitement run very high, and some threatened that they would take me out and hang me. So when the day was set for me to get there, they was divided among themselves. I went and when I got there one young man had started with his gun, and swore, with an oath, that the first one that interfered with my preachin' would get killed. I went and one of my friends was so overcome that he was almost throwed into a fit, but I preached and the people accepted the truth. Some of them fought me, while others says "These things are so," and so under great opposition we succeeded in callin' together a congregation at that place against the doctrines of men. I turned back to my home, went back agin into the mountins among the

poorer people, and begin to try and learn them the way of truth and holiness.

From there I went to Laurel County and there met great opposition, and they closed their doors agin me. I rid up and the meetin' house was locked and I preached out in the yard. I begin to sow the seed of the Gos*pel* in that community, and several people accepted the Gos*pel,* among the number was their pastor and thus today is preachin' the Word. All of this time I was preachin' onct a month in Rockcastle County, where we had established the truth under great opposition. We continued to preach there at Provi*dence* for seven years. The church growed very strong and to-day numbers about four hundred members. The enemy almost seemed to git the lead in one place in Rockcastle County, and so I succeeded in getting Bro. Thaddeus Hutson of Covington, Indiana, to help me down there, as one of the old brethren said that me and Bro. Hutson would make a team,

so me and him went together, and as one can chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight, we went down and made a strong effort for the truth. One of the enemy rode by after we begin preachin' and looked to-ward me as I was settin' on the porch, and I spoke to him kindly. He cursed me with all the bitter oaths that the devil would inspire him to use, and swore that if he had had his gun he would have shot me. He went home and got his gun and passed the meetin' house a time or two with it. My friends come to me and says, "Bro. Davis you are goin' to be killed. They have said so and it looks like nothin' would constrain them; they are goin' to carry it out." They said "While you are in this here community, stay in at night, and of days don't walk close to the bushes for you ere liable to be shot from ambush." Some of them advised me to go home and let Bro. Hutson continue the meetin'. But Bro. Hutson and I continued the

meetin', didn't listen to what our friends said, neither feared our enemies. The meetin' continued with good interest and succeeded in callin' together about sixty-five as the Church of Christ, to meet and worship accordin' to His divine will. Our enemies become quiet, some of the strongest of them agin us obeyed the Gos*pel.* Sence then the enemy has begin its secret work of darkness, and a short time ago one of the young brethren and his sister was shot down in front the door, right near where the mob stood that had swore they would kill me if I come. Notwithstandin', the truth is continuin' to grow in that community. They are not all desperadoes, but some of them is the best people that I ever met. They are the most easiest people to weep on account of their sins when convinced, but very courageous when they are angry.

Through our labors through the mountins of Kentucky, we have succeeded in callin' together five new congregations

and have built four new houses, and succeeded in turnin' over several that had started wrong. I have preached the Gos*pel* to these poor people under the trees, in their school houses and around their own fire-sides, and find them to be great Gos*pel* subjects.

I went back in the northeast corner of Whitley County, where some did not seem to know what the Gos*pel* was, lots of 'em couldn't read, and I begin to preach. The opposition was runnin' very high, some cried one thing and some another, and the multitude was divided. They finally succeeded in sendin' after one of their preachers, their pastor, and him with three other pastors come and tried to confuse my meetin'. He come to my meetin' and disturbed it, callin' me ugly names. I were showin' where he was wrong, and on one occasion he jumped to his feet and shuck his fist in my face, callin' me a "wild hog." The only answer I give him, I turned to the

audience and said to 'em, "Sisters, do you all really think I am a hog?" They answered with loud cheers, clappin' their hands and stompin' their feet, and the poor pastor saw his craft had fell and sit down, but not to weep but to grit his teeth and growl. I told the audience that I didn't want to be disturbed by him as he had treated me very bad on several occasions, and if he was a-goin' to be there that night, I didn't wish to come. He declared that he was and would stay there and confuse my meetin', that I should not preach that dangerous doctrine to the people. I said, "Then as I don't wish to be disturbed by him, or be with such a character as him at night, if any one will furnish me their house I will preach at his house to-night." And one man, a very dangerous man, jumped to his feet and said, "Mr. Davis, you kin preach at my house, and no man or set of men shall disturb you. The man that 'tempts to disturb your meetin' to-night

will never disturb it no more." He had two heavy guns on him. I thanked him for his house and thought of the Scripture, to make friends with Mammon, for when you are cast out they will take you in. And as I was arrangin' to go to his house, the pastor said if I would come back the next day and hear him show people how bad I was, that he would stay away that night, so I told him I would certainly do that; if I was not in harmony with the Scriptures I would certainly get in harmony, and I would come back and hear him. But he requested that I should not speak in the meetin' on the next day. So that night I had a young man with me assistin' me in the meetin'. After everything had got quietly at the place where we were stayin' all night, I said to the young man "Tomorrow is goin' to be the greatest persecution and no tellin' what they will attempt to do with me tomorrow, so you slip quietly to the barn, get out your horse, saddle

him and you go about fifteen miles to where my friends is, and tell them of the great persecution at this place. Go with all speed, consult no man by the wayside, and get back here in the mornin' before the sun shines." He immediately went quietly to the barn, got his horse and started away. The excitement was runnin' very high, they were threatenin' to take me out of the house and mob me. So on the next day with my friends and my enemies and four preachers, of two denominations, we met at the house to hear what dangerous doctrine that I was preachin' exposed. The preacher got into the stand and personated me one hundred and nine times, called me very bad names. He had with him a young lawyer to read Webster's Unabridged Dictionary to show that I was wrong. So the preacher proceeded to prove that it was right to preach for a stipulated salary, to take wages. He 'tempted to quote the Scriptures where Paul said in

II. Corinthians, "I robbed other churches, takin' wages of them, to do you service." He tried to find this passage in I. Corinthians and made a failure, and told the brethren to be patient, that he would find it. Moments seemed to be almost minutes, and minutes begin to feel like hours. Two of the pastors was settin' one on each side of me, and as they had tole the people that I was preachin' false doctrines, I jest wanted to show them how little of the Scriptures they knew, and I opened my Bible, not bein' allowed to speak, and I held my finger on a certain verse of a certain chapter and reached it over to him, and he hollered out to his pastor, or Boss in the stand that seemed to be rulin' with a rod of iron, jest where he could find that verse. The pastor turned immediately to the verse, sayin' "Yes," as though he knew that was it, and when he turned to it his face turned red an' he said, "No, brother, that's not it." Then I turned immediately to the

gentleman on the other side of me and put my finger on another verse in another chapter, and he cried out to his lord, "that can be found in a certain chapter in a certain verse." He said "Yes," and turnin' to that said, "No, that't not it." The pastor settin in front of me seen what I was doin' called to him to hand his book to him, he could find it. He taken the book down and searched it very closely, but to the astonish*ment* of the audience all the pastors were in confusion, not one of them could find it,—but they all knew I was preachin' false doctrine! but they didn't know where to find the scriptures. After I seen that I had gained a great victory over the men of ignorance, with my mouth sealed, I was settin' still rejoicin', and all at onct the pastor who the night before had called me a wild hog, stepped near to me and said, "Brother Davis, where is that scripture?" Knowin' that my mouth had been sealed on the evenin' before, I put

my hand to my mouth, showin' to him that he with his combined force had sealed my mouth and that I was not allowed to speak, and thus I turned my back upon the pastor, who in a few moments flew into a mad fit, and I thought, as others did, that he was goin' to jump on me; and he declared "You people are astonished to see such a character as him that can find the Scripture so readily, and I want to tell you the reason why he can find it. He is preachin' the doctrine of Daniel Sommer." I held my Bible high in my hands and pointed to the gilt letters which reads "Holy Bible." The people knowed I only brought one book and that I had been preachin' nothin' but what could be found in that book. So the multitude was divided. He continued to ask me then, would I leave the community, after admittin' the day before that after he would expose me and show what a bad character I was that he would git in his buggy and leave. He continued to

ask me, "Will you now leave this community and stop your preachin' here?" I set and listened to him a few moments, thinkin' he would stop after knowin' I was not allowed to speak in the house. Then I riz and walked very briskly to the door, stopping outside of the house on a little platform in front of the door, and with my Bible in my hands turned to the pastor and said, "Ladies and gentlemen, the devil never tempted Adam and Eve so great as this man has tempted me after knowin' that he has first sealed my mouth." As I begin to talk the sun was comin' down very heavy on the back of my head. A friend of mine riz and run out with an *um*brel and held it over me, and I begin to talk, and as I talked the people cried out, "Brother Davis you come right in the house and defen' yourself, you walk right in and defen' yourself." I said "If those pastors are all willin', with the lawyer that they have, and all else concerned, I will come in and

make my defense." As I went in I seen these pastors had a great pile of books piled on the stand. I begin to take 'em up one at a time, and I pointed to the Webster's Unabridged and the little lawyer,—the same as they had combined agin Jesus of Nazareth—and I begin to show sech filth as they had brought into that house to try to prove that I had preached false doctrine, or that the Bible was wrong, that the devil ought to be ashamed of himself. So I talked about ten or fifteen minutes, and the meetin' broke up with great excitement — I disremember whether it was dismissed or not. Then they closed us out. They said "As the pastors won't leave and let you alone, we will jest simply lock the doors agin all of you." I said "All right, gentlemen, you can lock your doors agin the truth, you can stop your ears, but" I said, "this meetin' is a-goin' to continue in this community at the risk of my life." I said "All them that want to hear the Gos*pel*

CORN CREEK, WHITELY CO., KY.

Every meeting house in the country shut against him, he preached under a beech tree and had nearly 100 additions. They now have a good meeting house and a lively church.

preached tomorrow meet me at the edge of the Calendar Road in the shade of the big beech tree." One of my friends, I remember, made a piece of poetry in reference to that, beginnin'

"Bro. Davis came down on Whetstone Creek,
He said he would like to preach a week.
The people all crowded out to see
Him preach them a sermon under a big beech tree.
Some said he give them too big a dose,
And he turned right round and preached to Joce."

The meetin' continued for several days and several people was lead to Christ. Many of those people was convinced that I was preachin' the truth and that the pastors was wrong. The pastors' influ*ence* was hurt, my influ*ence* growed stronger every day. We closed the largest crowd that ever was met for the purpose of baptizin'. Baptized several people, and turned and went away from one

of the greatest battlefields that I had ever fought agin the man of sin. I returned back home and found that it had been published in the daily papers that they had mobbed me. Excitement was runnin' high. I am glad to say that while some of those people in their ignorance of the truth will oppose it, as soon as they are convinced they are the most willingest people I ever met to confess their sins.

I returned back to Rockcastle County, where the excitement had previously been very high, and contiued to preach the Gos*pel* there under great opposition. One of my brethren who had onct been a strong opposer of me, but had learned the truth and become obedient to the faith, moved away to Crab Orchard in Lincoln County, where John Smith got his ugly handle to his name—Raccoon,—and he wrote me he wanted me to come up there and preach the Gos*pel* near the very place where Smith had preached onct. But they had gone so far away

from the truth and gone after the things of this world that they wouldn't allow me to have their house. He went to call on and ask the pastor could I preach in his house. He said "No," said "I have heerd of that man Davis and he tears up churches. He preaches false doctrine. He can't preach in this community. I don't want sech stuff as that preached in my church. His doctrine is contrary to the Scriptures." The brother said to him, "Can you prove that it is?" He said he could. "All right, then I want you to meet him at my house" and said "I will give five dollars a day to meet him at my house to show him that the Church of Christ is unscriptural and that the church you belong to is scriptural." The pastor got very nervous and talked like a mad man, and said he had no time or patience to fool with such a character. "Well" he said, "if he is wrong you ought to take the time and get him started right, because I used to belong to your church

and left it 'cause he showed me you was wrong, and if he is wrong you should prove it to him." He said he had no time. The brother he said "I'll make it worth your time by adding five dollars and make it ten dollars a day to have a public debate and show him that he's wrong." That most made the pastor order him out of the house. My friend then went away and tried to get a grove for me to preach in, but it did not seem they wanted such preachin' on their land. So you can see that where the Gospel onct was preached, and where hundreds of people accepted it, that to-day they have got so far away from the Gospel when they hear the truth they cry out "strange doctrine."

Notwithstandin' that in the beginnin' of my preachin' a little over fourteen years ago, I could scarcely read, and only findin' in the mountins of Kentucky a very few disciples, and being poor in this world's goods, with all these disadvan-

tages I began the work, and to-day I can glance back over the work and see over 1200 persons have been led to Christ, and the truth has been heerd through the mountins of Kentucky, and many hearts are rejoicin'. I onct numbered my friends in the country by the few, but now they are numbered by the hundreds. Some of my preachin' brethren said—two of them on one occasion—"Davis, if you preach such doctrine as that in this country, and fight the stipulated salary and fight the entertainments in the meetin' house to raise money for the support of the Gos*pel,* you won't have decent clothes to wear out to meetin'; your wife will have to patch your clothes, and you will come to nothin'." I said "Gentlemen, don't try to skeer me with poverty, I am acquainted with him. I have been a orphan boy knocked about from place to place, and I can't be skeered by such as that. The only way to convince me that I am wrong is to show me that God has

not authorized it." That pastor then had a nice home, and in less than ten years he was livin' in a rented house without any influence, and I owned a nice little farm that I call "My Old Kentucky Home," and my friends was numbered by the thousands, and I had preached the Gospel in eight states. My calls was so great that I couldn't fill half of them. So to God be all the praise! I knew that I were ignorant and unlearned, but the Scriptures say that "if any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not." And Jesus has said, "Come and learn of me," and Paul said to study; so I begin searchin' the Scriptures day and night, and the result is God has wonderfully blessed the labor, and I am rejoicin' to know that "God has chose the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and

things which are not, to bring to nought things that are. That no flesh should glory in his presence." (I. Corinthians, 1:27, 28, 29.)

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